

Once upon a time there was a foolish general who commanded a foolish army.

One evening they set up camp after a long day pursuing the enemy.

They had closed the gap.

Tomorrow there would come a battle.

But the general wasn't worried.

His army was large. His soldiers had the finest weapons.

He himself owned a magnificent set of armor and a famous jeweled sword.

As he climbed onto his cot to sleep, he said to himself,

“After we win the battle tomorrow I will be famous.

My armor will be on display in the museum!”

But for that foolish general and his army, there was no battle... and no fame.

In the middle of the night, the general was wakened from sleep  
by a gruff voice and a sword at his throat.

It was the ENEMY! They had stolen silently into camp while the general  
and his careless army slept without any sentries posted.

How helpless the general felt in his pajamas!

His armor and sword hung useless in the corner, out of reach.

The foolish general and his army were never heard from again.

The goal of this sermon is that this will not happen to US!

For we too are in an army -- God's army!

He wants us armed, alert, and ready  
for the battle that looms.

He has prepared everything we need. Our weapons are arrayed before us!

Hear, then, the Word, by means of which He will equip us today:

**READ THE TEXT**

The message of the text is simple: **SOLDIER, PUT ON YOUR ARMOR!**

The matter is urgent, and there's no time to waste,  
for as the foolish general discovered too late, the enemy is nearer than we think.

He has stolen into our **HOMES**,  
sowing seeds of discord and dissatisfaction

He has infiltrated our **CHURCHES**,  
planting doubt, apathy, and open rebellion against God's Word

Much of the time, Satan conducts a "guerrilla" warfare,  
disguising himself in sweetness and subtlety.

But for most of us there will come what Paul here calls "the evil day,"  
when Satan steps out of the shadows  
to challenge us openly with all his terror and power...

a day of frightful **ACCUSATIONS** and hellish **ANGER**,  
a night of undisguised **TEMPTATION** –  
blatant, intoxicating, and well nigh irresistible!

Will you be ready when it comes,  
or will Satan catch you in your pajamas, unprepared to resist?

The evil day for you may be tomorrow...or even this very afternoon!  
**PUT ON YOUR ARMOR NOW!**

So that we don't forget any of the essentials God provides,  
Paul lists each piece of armor in sequence.  
Let's examine them one by one... (list on sermon notes sheet)

First, your BELT.

Soldiers in Paul's day wore loose-fitting tunics,  
knee-length or even longer.

The **BELT** buckled over the tunic to keep it from tripping up a soldier  
as he ran and fought.

God's **BELT** for us is **TRUTH**.

For our enemy is "The father of Lies,"  
and the world is full of his propaganda...

“Everyone’s doing it – don’t miss out!”  
“Nobody believes that any more – it’s outdated.”  
“Have your fun – you’ve got plenty of time”

Lots of people get tripped up on lies like these, but not the soldier whose belt is the Truth.

He knows the Word of God.

So he does not launch out blindly, believing everything he hears and reads.

Instead, he listens for the voice of Jesus, who says “I am the TRUTH.”  
He trusts His Captain, who says, “Follow me!”

How about YOU?

Do you know who God is? Who you are? Where you’re headed?

God’s TRUTH is your BELT... put it on!

The second piece of armor is the BREASTPLATE.

It was made of two solid pieces of metal covered with leather.

It fit over the chest and back, protecting vital organs from sword and arrow.

God’s BREASTPLATE for us is RIGHTEOUSNESS.

By that, the Scriptures mean the “integrity,” the good and decent life that comes from being in a right relationship with God.

How many Christians are struck down in the battle because they wear no breastplate!

Their deeds do not match their creed, and so they are sitting ducks for the accusations of those who call them “hypocrites.”

When I was installed here at Trinity, I was asked,  
“Will you adorn the doctrine of our Savior with a godly life?”

Too many pastors do not live what they preach and leave their churches in chaos.

Too many eager laymen have their witness ruined because their careless lives make a mockery of their “Christian” label.

God has prepared a set of righteous deeds for us to do.

Like a breastplate, those deeds adorn and protect our witness to Christ...put them on!

Don’t forget the THIRD piece – your BOOTS!

Historian Flavius Josephus wrote that the Romans had “nails in their boots” – those strong, cleated boots carried the Roman armies far and fast – and made them more sure-footed than their enemies.

God has a set of boots that will take us a long way in a hurry – the boots of THE GOSPEL OF PEACE,  
the Good News of a Savior who brings PEACE to troubled hearts,  
forgiveness to burdened consciences.

People who know that Gospel and its peace can't wait to march out with it, indeed, even RUN to faraway places for others to hear it too.

**“How beautiful upon the mountains”** are their feet!

The Gospel of Peace is your pair of boots...put them on!

The Fourth piece is your SHIELD.

The Roman shield was heavy and oblong...long enough to protect a soldier from his neck down to his ankles. A special fire-resistant substance was smeared on those shields to enable them to deflect deadly fire arrows without serious damage.

What will Satan shoot at us?

Among his “flaming arrows” are these:  
the pain of criticism from others  
the pressure to conform  
the shock of bereavement or divorce  
the tenacious grip of worry

But God provides a shield that can withstand each one – the shield of FAITH.  
not faith in the “goodness of humanity”!  
not an empty optimism that “time will heal everything”!  
but a calm and confident trust in Jesus Christ, who promises that  
He will not condemn us, but pardon and redeem us.

To trust in Him is **the victory that overcomes the world.**

That's our SHIELD. Are you holding on to yours? If not, put it on now!

Next is the HELMET.

The easiest way to dispatch an opponent in hand-to-hand combat was to administer a blow to the head. So soldiers in ancient times wore helmets of metal with curved sides to deflect blows and attachments to cover the cheeks and the neck.

God's helmet for us is SALVATION,  
the blessed assurance that we have been rescued from sin and death  
and that nothing can pull us from His grip.

Those who know they are saved  
can "keep their heads on their shoulders."  
They will not be crushed even if life caves in on them.

They hold their heads high in HOPE, knowing that  
when the dust of battle clears, they will be victorious.

SALVATION is your HELMET... put it on!

Finally, your SWORD.

Every other piece of armor is for your defense.  
But the sword is an OFFENSIVE weapon.

The sword mentioned in this text is the machaira, the "short sword"  
used by Roman infantrymen, sharp and easy to maneuver,  
best used in close quarters!

The SWORD God places in our hands is the same one Jesus used in his  
deadly battle with Satan in the Wilderness...the sword of the WORD of GOD.  
The Word preached. The Word recorded in Scripture.  
The Word spoken on the lips of a witness.

For too many of us Christians, it is like Excalibur,  
the sword stuck in the stone of biblical illiteracy.

They don't remember it. They cannot draw it out.  
For they have stopped trying to commit it to memory.  
Many no longer study it in class or even read it at home.

Is it any wonder that they find themselves empty-handed when temptation comes,  
or when they face a cultist's deceptions,  
or when they meet a defeated soul that hungers for a hopeful word.

Yet some, like young Arthur,  
have learned to draw the Sword from the Stone – they read it, digest it,  
and take it to heart,  
and with it they defeat the devil Himself!

You can too! The Sword is God’s Word... put it on!

And if it seems too large a task, the battle too long, the Enemy too strong,  
hear this Good News.

You have no foolish general, but the greatest of leaders.  
Jesus Christ is “our captain in the well-fought fight.”

He it was who took Satan on toe-to-toe in the Wilderness and triumphed.

He it was who died on the cross,  
and by His very dying crushed the Serpent’s head!

He it was who rose to life again, and thereby opened a door through death  
that no one can close!

In the midst of that great battle He spoke a word to his tiny band of men.  
“WATCH AND PRAY” He told them in Gethsemane.

The foolish general at the start of this sermon made two mistakes.  
First, he took off his armor.  
Second, and even worse, he went to sleep, as did his army!

We grow weary and heavy of heart.  
So here and now, in His Word, Jesus comes beside us to say again,  
“Wake up! For I am near you. Let me help you put that armor on!”

The hymn that we sang just before the sermon tells us how it happens:  
**Put on the Gospel armor, Each piece put on with prayer!**

The very directive from Paul in the text:  
**Pray at all times... keep alert with perseverance!**

PRAY, that He clothe you, fit you with your armor today – that he may guide  
your trembling hands to cinch His belt round you,  
to pull on those boots, secure that breastplate,  
fasten that helmet, take up your shield, and grasp the Sword he gives.

PRAY for one another, for we do not fight alone.

He has set us into an army with divisions and regiments and teams  
that fight together and uphold one another...

When was the last time you prayed for your pastor?

for the church's officers and ministry teams?

for the McInneses and Wagners out in Wilsonville?

for our SS teachers and our day school staff?

For they need your prayers, as you need theirs!

PRAY! For you do not stand in your strength, but in His alone.

Let us stand near our Captain, and none can stand against us!

**I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse,  
whose rider is called Faithful and True.**

**With justice He judges and makes war.**

**His eyes are like blazing fire and on His head are many crowns.**

**He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself.**

**He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is The Word of  
God. (Revelation 19)**

Follow Him, and do not fear the battle that is to come.

**"The fight will not be long.**

**This day the noise of battle,**

**The next, the victor's song!"**